

WITHERED PEACE AMIDST INDIA'S BELLICOSE RHETORIC

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Abstract

Relations between Pakistan and India have been viewed largely from a classical realism perspective. India's government under Modi has redefined policy outlook towards Pakistan. An aggressive posturing is definitely to address domestic political gains by linking disturbance in Kashmir and internal security with Pakistan's alleged "interference". This however has serious repercussions on long term regional peace. The situation suffers due to the dilemma of different perspectives on what constitutes peace in South Asia. While Pakistan's emphasis is on cordial relations with all neighbours in the region particularly with India- with dignity and resolution of Kashmir issue. For India, peace is only possible if Pakistan accepts India's assertion that terrorism inside India is only due to Pakistan's policy of accommodating "terrorists" and facilitating their activities against India. This makes any meaningful dialogue to move towards peace simply unachievable.

Keywords: Regional Peace, Conflict, Hindutva, Human Security.

Introduction

While governments have primary responsibility to protect civilians and prevent violence, the complexity, scale and diversity of conflict means that no single entity, on its own, can ensure peace. A comprehensive network of relationships and actions is required. The need to discuss conflicts in the context of human security is important because "peace" cannot be achieved if it is established through use of force or authoritarian regime; the idea is of strong peace. Ignoring root causes and focusing on physical violence, any attempt to bring peace would be futile as the conflict would continue to reemerge with new shape and size.

Johan Galtung made the distinction between negative and positive peace.¹ Negative peace is the absence of direct physical violence, while positive peace is absence of structural violence that includes marginalization, injustice, discrimination. Although negative peace was desirable, Galtung argued that more focus should be put on attaining positive peace. Not only was this the best way to prevent future wars, but also to build societies based on human empathy and solidarity.² Any academic discourse on peace explains that while state centric approach is important to maintain the sanctity of borders and sovereignty, it is the people centric approach that brings long term

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dividends for prosperity. Absence of war is important for stability, but it is the absence of structural violence as defined by Johan Galtung that guarantees sustainable peace. In other words, negative peace (absence of war) should not be the only priority, in fact, positive peace (absence of structural violence) should be the only defining direction for peace between India and Pakistan. As mentioned above, classical realism would continue to put both Pakistan and India in zero-sum situation. India's current aggressive policy vis-à-vis Pakistan has further complicated the situation and focus is now on tit for tat response.

Obstacles to a Regime of Peace in South Asia

South Asia, despite growing rapidly remains one of the under developed regions in the world. The reasons are largely political in nature with negative impact on regional connectivity. While the world becomes more interdependent economically, South Asia still faces problems of low intra-regional trade, lack of energy cooperation and little intra-regional tourism. It is not just the traditional sources of conflicts that obstruct peace but a number of *non-traditional security threats*, that includes ethnically motivated insurgencies and religious extremism that undermine state's ability to manage the conflict. These internal conflicts are also important to examine because, in inter-state armed conflicts, a cooperative framework to manage and eventually resolve the conflict is often not well established or followed institutionally.

Inter-state and intra state conflicts have shattered any hope for South Asia's economic, social and political transformation. Communal violence, ethnic conflicts and wars have deeply affected the growth of the region.³ The biggest challenge that demands serious preventive mechanism is to deal with diverse political experiences, conflicting ideologies, issues on ethnic identities and deteriorating economic conditions across and within the states.

India and Pakistan being two major countries of South Asia are locked in a hostile relationship for decades. The size of India geographically and economically has led to the perception of the country dominating the regional politics and influencing smaller nations. India on the other hand argues, the smaller neighbours gang up on multi-lateral regional fora. The tendency to see conflict in zero sum frameworks has led to deteriorated economies in the region. Thus, the uneasiness remains in the region creating obstacles to a regime of peace in South Asia. In order to break this vicious circle of depending on "local public opinion syndrome" which is often not truly representative of the people, the leaders need to bridge the differences and look for cooperation framework.

There have been many arguments about whether the conflicts which are considered to be internal are manifestations of inter-state conflicts, or they are two entirely different spheres where it is hard to find linkages. According to Dahal et al, "the three inter-state wars between India and Pakistan were closely linked to unresolved internal conflicts within the region. The official Pakistani position on the wars of 1948 and 1965 is that these were sparked off by internal developments inside Indian-controlled Kashmir.

Conversely, the Indian position is that these wars were the consequence of Pakistani interference in Indian internal affairs. The positions are reversed with reference to the 1971 war, where Pakistan claimed Indian interference in its domestic matters and India argued that the cause of the conflict was internal breakdown in East Pakistan."⁴ On the other hand, the porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan changes the conflict dimension as the continuous flow of refugees as well as militants from one side of border to another creates extreme security issues especially with the presence of international forces in Afghanistan. Similarly, India and China have conflicting claims over Aksai Chin area and Arunachal Pradesh in India which are still not completely resolved despite confidence building measures between India and China. Officials of both India and China officially maintain that the territory is part of their area.

In 2006, for instance, the Chinese ambassador to India stated that all of Arunachal Pradesh is Chinese territory.⁵ India reacted with a military buildup as reported in the media.

With such complexities, the line between the intra and inter-state conflicts in South Asia gets blurred making the conflicts even more intricate. Because of the multifaceted effects of internal conflicts in the region, a common understanding of the causes and preventive mechanism is important.

Unity Not Uniformity

The colonial past of the South Asian region provides some continuity through institutions and standards, the shared legacy of English language, rail, road and river connections which are now inactive in post-colonial independent states. There are many other factors that may contribute in bringing some stability for instance, the market forces that are increasing investment and trade in services and the private sector's interest in sectors such as hydropower in Nepal and Bhutan importance of India's realization that instability and lack of development in the neighborhood has great cost. There percussion of such costs include illegal immigration, drug trafficking, religious extremism and lack of credibility outside the region. The other factors include successful examples like ASEAN and EU and the growing realization of the financial costs of not cooperating and the benefits of taking collective attitudes in global multilateral trade, environment, climate change negotiations. In spite of the political and security challenges and many ups and downs in the short term, there are multiple supportive factors which can help in charting a cooperative framework. The choice is either we become prisoners of jingoism and religious hatred or we proudly own our sovereign status while acknowledging our identities. Acknowledgment of our own diversity will help consolidate our own nationhood hence, doing away the fear of losing the identity.

Regional and Local Political Dynamics

During his election campaign in 2014, Modi's provocative anti-Pakistan speeches remained the focus in media.⁶ BJP continued to stress on reorientation of its

foreign policy and India's status regionally and globally. The main focus of this reorientation seems to be to play tough on Pakistan while strengthening friendly relations with Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, thus it is a policy to isolate Pakistan in the region and blaming Pakistan for troubles in Kashmir. The reluctance on India's part not to engage with Pakistan continued since BJP came into power. Every initiative from Pakistan's side to resume talks were declined and even after four years in power, Modi government seems uneasy with any proposal to engage in dialogue for peace and stability in the region.

In the first year of power, the foreign policy agenda of Modi's government was to engage with neighbouring countries. Starting his official state visits, Modi went to Bhutan, and in just over a year he visited all of India's immediate neighbours, with the exception of an official visit to Pakistan, though he made a personal visit to attend Nawaz Shrif's grand daughter's wedding. That visit was in itself dramatic, he came to Pakistan on his way back from Kabul where he blamed Pakistan for terrorism in India. The complex relationship with its two powerful nuclear-armed neighbours, Pakistan and China, continued to mark by tensions and political and military standoffs. The changing regional politics of alliances and partnerships between China and Pakistan and Pakistan's renewed relations with Russia have resulted in new developments. India's involvement in Afghanistan facilitated by US has also contributed in making the regional environment more complex. Indian security establishment harps on the same tune crying for world's attention on the vulnerability of its security accusing Pakistan for violence inside its territory. The narrative is heavily based on 2008 terrorist attack and being victim of such attack by terror groups. The public speeches by Modi and other BJP members directly point Pakistan's security establishment, however, officially India maintain ambiguity as Roy Choudhry states, "any suggestion of a "rogue" element in the ISI responsible for these incidents, or a lack of authorization by the ISI chief, is dismissed by New Delhi.⁷ The duality of India's statements vis-à-vis Pakistan has led to the failure of India's grand plan for isolating Pakistan. The development in the region and Pakistan's engagement with other powers were reason enough to failure of India's narrative which could not bring desired results as perceived by Ajit Doval. The rising power of China and Russia's renewed interest in South Asia is redefining the regional politics with global implications.

With the US providing numerous strategic favors to India, including access to its most advanced weapon systems, Pakistan has moved to strengthen its longstanding strategic ties with China. Increasingly, the region has been polarized into rival Indo-US and Pakistani-China blocs, adding an explosive new element to both the India-Pakistan and US-China conflicts, and raising the danger that conflict between India and Pakistan is no longer a bilateral issue but it could draw in the world's great powers. A further consequence of Washington's downgrading of relations with Pakistan, its principal regional ally during the Cold War, in favour of India, is that it has emboldened the Indian ruling elite in its dealings with Pakistan.

BJP's Hindutva: Impact on the Trajectory of Indo-Pak Bilateral Relations

In order to discuss diplomatic uneasiness in the region due to deteriorating bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, an analysis of the motivation behind Modi government's anti-Pakistan rhetoric is required. BJP never hesitated in its anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim stance even after coming to power. Modi being the right wing hardliner proved that his political standing has more to do with anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim rhetoric than the economic genius that was portrayed through Gujrat model of development. Religion became a burning issue when the BJP, which was struggling to become a national party and an alternative to Congress adopted a resolution in June 1989 to build a temple of Rama in Ayodhya. The Ayodhya issue helped BJP immensely to exploit religion and mobilize masses in favor of Hindutva. It became such a emotional issue in Indian local politics which led to the fall of V.P. Singh government shattering the idea of a secular India with strong democracy. In July 1992, L.K Advani, the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, reportedly told the House: "You must recognize the fact that from two seats in parliament in 1985, we have come to 117 seats in 1991. This has happened primarily because we took up the Ayodhya issue".⁸ BJP popularized the narrative that the founding of India was not an independence from the British Colonial rule but the liberation from the Muslim invaders.

BJP having enjoyed public support using religion finds a tough situation when it comes to political administration and policy making. Though claim to be committed to the ideological agenda of RSS, Sandwich between political allies and the its ideological mentor, BJP pretended to change aggressive approach to Hindu nationalism. The change in nomenclature has not made significant difference. Now with focus on "cultural nationalism", the new phrases like true secularism and ensuring internal security are just to camouflage the same old stand of RSS influenced Hindutva ideology. In order to survive politically and reassuring its followers, BJP needs continues war like tense situation that feeds the environment with fear. The real question is how far Modi government would take this ultra-right wing aggressive behavior.

BJP Election Manifesto vis-a-vis Pakistan: An Agenda for "No Peace"

The warmongering agenda that BJP defines the current manifesto of BJP presents revisionist and hawkish undertones, which defines Modi regime's approach in the region particularly towards Pakistan.⁹ For instance, implementing the pledge to remove Article 370 declaring Kashmir as a non-negotiable issue and stepping back from guarantees for special status to state of Jammu and Kashmir as an autonomous state in the Indian Union. This shows the jingoistic approach to escalate tensions with Pakistan. The No first Use principle of Indian nuclear doctrine was considered a weak approach and BJP called for reversal of this policy that successive Indian regimes maintained to prove India's stand as a responsible nuclear state.

BJP's anti Pakistan Rhetoric: Indian Media Changing Security Dynamics

Indian media seems to be “convinced” of the BJP anti Pakistan oratory. BJP leaders do not need to do much, the fire brand “anchor persons” and “security experts” on media do their best to lead the public opinion against Pakistan given there is no major source of information on Pakistan available to common Indians. Pakistan is often shown and described through the lens of terrorism, low economic growth and absence of progressive civil society. Aggressive, abusive and illogical rant against Pakistan contributes to negative image of the country thus reinforcing Hindu nationalist agenda.

Tension at LoC and Prospects for Peace

Cross border firing continues with episodic breaks but it intensified significantly under Modi regime resulting in civilian casualties. Kashmiris being the victim of heavy shelling and now after revoking article 370, they are facing human rights violation by the Modi government. This unrestrained firing along the Line of Control (LoC) violating the 2003 ceasefire agreement, has had negative impact on peace and stability. In its drive for recognition as a great economic power at global stage, the BJP seems to ignore that regional peace and prosperity is the key without which India cannot enjoy the fruits of its rising economic power.

Policy of Restraint undergoing a Shift

Modi's Pakistan policy can be seen within the framework of both constructivism as well as realism. As constructivism requires finding new dimensions in the relationship and making ways to make it happen. The personal relationship between Nawaz and Modi followed that approach. Though the election campaign and manifesto stressed on India's resolve to *punish* Pakistan by pursuing a coercive approach once in power, however, this has not increased India's capacity to coerce its neighbor into any specific outcome. However, the rhetorical approach on bringing terrorism as the most important agenda is the indication of realism, which Indian regime is still continuing. Given the disparity between Indian and Pakistani economy, the realist in Modi demands an aggressive posture towards Pakistan.

As a Hindu nationalist party the BJP pursue an anti Muslim agenda and Modi's vote bank requires that he should consistently adopt an anti-Pakistan approach toward Pakistan. However, the constructivist lens provides a window of opportunity to Modi's foreign policy regarding facing the international community pressure and external compulsions. For instance, the developing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and growing Chinese investment in it is a matter of concern to India. While on the other hand development of Gwadar port also raise serious concerns for India. Therefore, under constructivism Modi during Nawaz Sharif's regime softened his stand toward Pakistan in order to maintain a delicate balance in its external policy approach.

Aggressive Policy and Question of 2003 Ceasefire Agreement

The architects of "Surgical Strike" perhaps not aware of the fact that there is a de-facto international boundary that exists between India and Pakistan along the Line of control. If for a moment, Indian claim of "successful surgical strike" is accepted, it opens another front for India to respond, it was the first time the political leadership publically announced its violation of LoC and owned trans-LoC operations. The claim makes India violator of the LoC, thus a breach of 2003 agreement.¹⁰ Though Pakistan vehemently denied any such strike took place, India continue to boost its redefinition of "security policy" by a claim of violation of ceasefire agreement. Hence the action puts India in yet another complex situation where if it has to weigh in the repercussions of its aggressive policy towards Pakistan.

India's Dilemma

The boosting of a "successful" surgical strike puts India in a complex situation, with claims of trans-LoC border operation, jeopardizing the future of any meaningful engagements between the two countries. Violating LoC demonstrated India's assertion of its control over whole of Jammu and Kashmir. India is now facing a dilemma of facing the rising public expectation of hard approach and the reality of being cautious diplomatically. Policies are not based on public speeches foreign policy in particular is a complex process that goes beyond political posturing. The current Indian approach has toxic effects making it hard to maintain its claim of a responsible democratic secular state. The aggressive tone and gestures that favor the myopic intolerant view of the "other" may be good for media but it is completely out of step with the rule of interaction between nation-states. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh summed up India's dilemma in these words, "The Modi government has slowly but surely undermined the values that any democratic polity should fiercely protect. Important national institutions vital for good governance are experiencing unprecedented new strains. Our neighbourhood is far less secured than it was in 2014. Our relations with neighbours have deteriorated in the last four years."¹¹ Former Minister Manish Tiwari highlighting the implications of ultra-Hindu nationalist orientation of Indian regional policy stated, "India has lost its eminent position in South Asia as a consequence of reckless adventurism in its neighbourhood. Today, the neighbourhood is bending towards China, with India looking on like a hapless bystander. Even in Afghanistan, where the attention of what remains of the 'Western Alliance' is focused, India is a non-player.

Though enjoying great partnership with the US administration, there are other voices in the US raising alarm on rising insecurity in the region due to Modi government's patronage to Hindu nationalists. The US National Intelligence Council (NIC) in its Global Trends report raised some important points, acknowledging that "the BJP is increasingly leading the Indian government to incorporate Hindutva into policy, may spark increased communal tensions in India, and further complicate relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh."¹²

Can We Expect a Change in Attitude?

Modi regime is now faced with dilemma of balancing its image as a responsible state in international political system and dealing with the pressures of local politics of Hindutva.

The hard school of thinking in India has nothing substantial to offer and this has become clear over the last 20 years. Nuclear capability of the two nations has changed the dynamics making Indian's conventional powers irrelevant. For Pakistan, reconciliation with Modi can only be possible if the BJP sheds off its *Hindutva* agenda, abandons anti-Pakistan rhetoric and makes an effort to cool down anti-Muslim sentiment within India. Unfortunately, the world community is ignoring the internal dynamics of Indian brinkmanship and unilaterally expects more and more bending from Pakistan.

Then emotional hype on "infiltration of terrorists" in Indian held Kashmir a consistent tool to divert attention from contentious issues. The current scene of India's internal politics suggests that the situation will last as such for some time. Stirring up Hindu-Muslim and anti Pakistan rhetoric would definitely bring the backlash affecting the most publicized "secular" "democratic" image. This wouldn't provide the same kind of benefits that it did at the domestic political level. By the same logic, however, Modi government would continue to accommodate communal violence by its affiliate groups to divert public demand for economic revolution promised in BJP manifesto.

Future of Peace in South Asia

Post 9/11 global politics redefined the dynamics of regional stability in South Asia. Pakistan's enhanced its policy focus more on the western border dealing with terrorism both internally and across the border in Afghanistan. While India's closeness with the US and its strategic partnership further added new dimensions in already complex relationship. This change in focus led to some to believe that the decade old hostile relationship between India and Pakistan would now take a back seat and for a few years Musharraf and Manmohan Singh regime did moved forward with peace initiatives. But as always, the no sustainable progress was made to ensure long term regional stability. India-US strategic partnership and growing Indian role in Afghanistan increased the level of mistrust between the two nations. Soon after coming in power, Modi government with full backing from the US unleashed a policy of portraying Pakistan as "state-sponsoring-terrorism" while deteriorating situation in Kashmir and India's high handedness led Pakistan to voice more forcefully its concerns internationally on human rights violations and use of violence against innocent people Kashmir. India's claim of cross border terrorism remains an old tactic of diverting the global attention from state oppression against the Kashmiris.

India is fundamentally satisfied with the territorial status quo in South Asia, including in Jammu and Kashmir.¹³ However Kashmir remains the least important issue. On August 5, Modi government abruptly made the decision to withdraw the special status given to Kashmir in Indian Constitution under article 370. This unilateral

decision tantamount to an "Indian Coup" where Kashmir's democratic freedom is abruptly abolished by executive decree. India's arbitrary bifurcation of the state into two union territories (Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh) is also legally contentious. The action has resulted in mass protests all over the world and international media has responded with questioning the Modi government's policy of human rights violations. The UN had special meeting on the issue after fifty years, other international organizations for instance, EU, Amnesty international, Human Rights Watch and Genocide Alert had special reports on the inhuman conditions in Indian Occupied Kashmir. Indian aggressive approach has exposed its anti-Muslim policies to fulfill the agenda of Akhand Bharat.

For India, dialogue for peace means engaging in confidence building measures, the future of Siachen Glacier, water management related to Wullar/Tulbul navigation project, Sir Creek, economic and trade cooperation, people to people contact and finally terrorism which appears to be the core issue. Pakistan's narrative on peace in South Asia starts with Kashmir conflict being the core issue and then of course engagement with India to resolve other problems. The difference of perspectives makes the realization of any meaningful cooperation between the two neighbours difficult. The complex web of perceptions is the major obstacle to peace and stability in the region. For India, CBMs is the way for final reconciliation between the two nations. For Pakistan, CBMs, though tried in the past under various initiative since 1965 war, that includes Tashkent Declaration, Simla Agreement, Agra summit and Lahore declaration produced no result because of India's lack of commitment on moving towards addressing the Kashmir dispute. The approach to "resolve" smaller issues with Pakistan, places India in its comfort zone, it is attractive to India because if agreed upon, India would find it more convenient to give concede on smaller disputes while this would put Pakistan in an uncomfortable situation to make compromise on bigger issues like that on Jammu and Kashmir.

According to Ashley Tellis, "given this inevitability, Indian policymakers want to avoid a sequential negotiation in which Islamabad pockets New Delhi's concessions on the smaller issues first and then stonewalls India when the most nettlesome obstacles finally come up for discussion. India's status quo disposition in regards to Pakistan is corroborated by its burgeoning ambitions outside of South Asia. India's economic success after its post-1991 reforms, the rise of China as a new great power, and the transformation of US Indian relations—to further enable New Delhi to steadily shift its focus beyond its immediate vicinity".¹⁴ India's security perceptions contradicts that of its neighbouring states resulting in tensions, lack of trust, little cooperation and other hostilities.

The future of peace in South Asia would remain bleak unless there is change in understanding the conflict. With different perception of the problem, any effort to engage positively for long term conflict resolution would continue to result in failure. What is thus required to adopt a different framework of understanding conflict, human security paradigm provides that framework as state security paradigm based on realism

has further strengthened the long claimed positions ignoring the changing security, political and economic dynamics in the region.

Human Security Paradigm for the Prevention of Armed Conflicts

The peaceful prevention of deadly conflict is a paradigm for addressing conflict issues, as well as a set of policies for building national and global security in the 21st century.¹⁵ It is an alternative to the policy of “preemptive” war and military dominance. It begins from the premise that war is not inevitable and that preventing the outbreak of violent conflict is less costly and can be more effective than responding, often through military force, once crises have already erupted. It seeks to understand the causes of conflict, both proximate and root, and to address them before disputes becomes violent. It seeks to address both immediate conflict issues and longer-term structural issues of injustice. Peaceful prevention frees up resources that can be used to meet basic human needs. Its benefits extend beyond any single state’s borders. One country’s armed conflict can result in economic destabilization and undermine human security for an entire region. At the same time, successful prevention of violent conflict in a country can contribute to the stability and resilience of the surrounding region. Communities and societies with the capacity to peacefully manage conflict can often better address other issues such as economic development, human rights, and political stability.

The preventive mechanism works through a policy of collaboration where the government in power device a strategy to take collaborative decision that result in win-win situation for both the parties to the conflict and provide some face saving opportunity that help in accepting the solution.

The cooperative mechanism should not only focus on implications of conflicts which usually becomes the main agenda in any of the initiatives taken in the region. But all the more important is to pay attention to the causes of the conflict. Any strategy to reduce conflict with eventual resolution largely depends on the leaders capacity to uphold and justify decisions keeping in view the interests of the parties to the conflict. Globalization has connected the world with innumerable benefits but it has also contributed in changing nature of the security threats. States are affected by cyber warfare, financial crimes, smuggling of weapons and Terrorism to name a few. There is a need to develop tools that are different from the ones applied in the past by identifying ways to help each other in identifying common approaches to combating these challenges.

Cooperation amid Conflict

The resolution of any conflict is based on not just on elimination of violence but a total transformation to positive peace. Kashmir conflict appears to be a protracted conflict where the legacy of hostilities and prevailing mistrust has made any attempt to sustainable negotiations great challenge and the area remains prone to violence. International Crisis Group’s report substantiated the argument in its report where it

stated, "as there have been little signs of neither demilitarization, nor an effective end to human rights abuses by Indian security forces, Kashmiri alienation still runs deep and easily fuelling public resentment. This has made it extremely difficult to build viable and sustained dialogue between the main parties".¹⁶ The lackluster peace process has resulted in an environment of negative peace. T.V Paul argues, "as there have been few attempts to sufficiently address the root causes of the conflict, most mediation attempts and talks have been centered on conflict management, rather than conflict resolution".¹⁷ Peace Scholars like Peter Wallensteen discussing the lack of any meaningful effort to address the root causes of the conflict states, "this makes it hard to point out any particular success or failures of conflict resolution. International mediation efforts have arguably contributed to reduced tensions; however, this has had little overall effect on resolving the conflict". When introducing the concept of positive peace, Galtung implicitly argued, "peace is something more than 'absence of war.'"¹⁸ David Barash summarizes the dilemma, "by pointing to examples of violations of social and political right, segmentation, fragmentation and marginalization of groups within Kashmir, one can to some extent argue the presence of structural violence in Kashmir suggest a fundamental failure of conflict resolution."¹⁹

The rise of Hindu nationalism particularly under Modi regime is gradually transforming India into an intolerant extremist society where any attempt for increased Kashmir autonomy is violently resisted. This intolerance is based on the fear among the Hindutva supporters that accepting Kashmiris right of self-determination would destabilize the Indian federation. Successful resolution of Kashmir conflict has become hostage to Indian domestic politics. The current Indian regime has exploited Kashmir as an issue of Indian identity which is now deeply embedded in societal structures. This has diminished any prospect of public support for peaceful resolution of the conflict.

In South Asian context, the process of conflict resolution has become a complex task due to increasing structural changes and involvement of growing number of actors. Rhetoric of identity as main reason of domestic limitations for policy change has made it difficult to address causes of conflict and changes in its character.²⁰ Third party intervention to facilitate dialogue both formally and informally has helped reduce tension and prevent outbreak of war to some extent but these attempts have never been sustainable. One factor for this failure is reducing the conflict to essentially a territorial claim resulting in absence of any structural peace building from below bringing it to elite peace-making objective. As Curle points out, "successful peace-building requires a change at grass-root level through multilateral mediation, rather than traditional diplomacy".²¹

Need for Engagement

The competing outlook between India and Pakistan persists due to the security competition. To redefine their national strategies for a change in strategic objectives needs revolutionary steps. The Indian policy perspective is based on its satisfaction with the status quo on its current geographical boundaries though BJP's Hindutva narrative has put a dent in its long maintained position by public rhetoric of reclaiming the entire

sub continent. Pakistan on the other hand demands the re-opening of the issues which are still considered unfinished and unsettled, Kashmir being the most important one.

Engagement however, is in the interest of both states: 1) To help deescalate crisis given the nuclear status of the two nations, 2) to improve their global reputation as responsible nations believing in peaceful resolution of conflicts, 3) to ensure sustained economic development for the entire South Asian region by investing in human security through opportunities of trade and business for common people and finally 4) to break the cycle of uncertain stability that the two nations have been living with for decades feeding an environment of fear of catastrophic wars.

The absence of structural peace building and increasing violent characteristic of the conflict has contributed in limiting any scope of viable peace process. Describing the situation, Bose argues, "Kashmir will remain a zone of intractable and recurrent conflict". Nuclear capability has certainly works as a deterrence but the situation demands an conducive environment for long term resolution as T.V Paul states, "Pakistan's consistent suggestion for third party support shows that rivalry is negotiable rather than inevitable."²² Given the fact that there is rise in tension in recent years, both Pakistan and India should have a mechanism to engage without being hostage to domestic politics.

The ability to accommodate debate beyond political level will help achieve a meaningful settlement of the conflict. The more Kashmir becomes ungovernable for India, it would not only be disastrous for the Kashmiri people but a blot to India's claim of secular democracy. Instead of pursuing an aggressive desire to be recognized for its economic and military superiority vis-à-vis Pakistan, India needs pragmatism and reconsideration of its zero-sum perspectives.

Though cooperative framework is questioned in many scholarly works with different case studies, for instance Laurie Nathan questions "the credibility of the concept of security community when applied to regions like Africa suffering from internal instability and violence."²³ He focuses on the negative impact that internal violence can have on interstate relations. He states, "important not to define security in military terms only. Security in the 21st century is more than the absence of war or the threat of war. Increasingly it means: the security of our societies, our infrastructure, our energy supply. A modern security policy for the 21st century must rely even more on human security. And it must have a cooperative approach if it is also to be effective against the new asymmetric security threats."²⁴

In order to establish sustainable peace order in South Asia, a renewed step needs to be taken for unhindered cooperative security framework. Mutual trust is the key that paves the way for practical cooperation. A process of disengaging with the past hostilities of the 20th century is too be adopted leaving behind outdated thinking based on competing behaviour and hegemonic designs. Mohammad Ayoob sums up the complex security dilemma when he write, "a comprehensive security community can be best achieved when "territorial satiation, societal cohesion, and political stability"²⁵ prevail within states as is the case in most industrialized countries. The absence of these

internal traits, i.e., effective statehood, often leads, in turn, also to inter-state violence. This view tends to lead to the conclusion that the inter-state security dilemma is less due to the uncertainty of the state actors about the defensive vs. offensive intentions by the others. Rather, it is related to the prevalence of malign and predatory motives of the governments trying to stabilize their internal and external position."²⁶

There is always a chance of ignoring the vital issues while handling the violent conflict. Mary Kaldor argues that in the course of protracted asymmetric conflicts there comes a stage when the reasons for the conflict get subsumed under the violence and the desperate desire to stop the violence overwhelms all else. The danger is that resolution of the conflict will provide the desired cessation of violence but could sidestep the vital issues of justice and rights that were originally at the core of the conflict. In such cases the peace achieved predicates another cycle of violence with peace in interregnum. It truly presents the South Asian dilemma, where the violent conflicts have been managed with the aim to contain violence but the main issues remain unresolved.

The institutional apparatus of South Asian states remains infinitely stronger than other regions facing armed conflicts for instance the Arab world, even in countries that have been systematically undermining, if not dismantling it, over decades. The capacity for good governance and human security remains endemic across much of South Asia and the potential for conflict continues to increase. Good leadership with a vision to keep the state and the region free of armed conflict can initiate policy decision that can help realize the goal for peaceful South Asia. This has been the lesson of history, states which demonstrate rational attitude with wisdom and collective good, their people flourish, nation become stronger. If the states are caught up with irrational egoistic politics, corruption, opportunism and violent behavior, nations suffer; economies deteriorate, fall into the trap of civil war and sometimes collapse or disintegrate.

NOTES

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